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Title:

Chapter 1 - 'Thinking as far back as was possible...'

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~~The earliest~~

The earliest situation

Shivering as far back as was possible, the first impression he had of the ~~world~~ in which he could remember himself having been was lying, ~~on~~ a little uncomfortably, across his mother's stomach, gazing ~~up~~ at the ceiling which shone with the light thrown upwards in strange pattern by the kerosene lamp. It was as if the room about him was vast, and the walls gave the impression in the varying gloom of waving slightly, like curtains, but then of curtains which did not hang straight down but closed in rather at the top, so as to give ~~the~~ effect of an effect of oppression, the ceiling held up by the lamplight, but yet encroaching all the same a little on the bounds of its real dimensions, waiting to fall, but unable to do so until there was darkness. Throughout his life he was gripped at night by an inordinate fear of the dark, which they told him he had inherited from his mother. The house being very largely built of weatherboard, at night it would creak ominously, threateningly, and out of the sounds his fertile imagination built nothing definite, but something shapeless, intangible, mystic, an ever-present horror which would not allow him to look behind, but forced him to stare straight to the front, mortally frightened of what he might see there, but unable to close his eyes for fear that the darkness, the Thing, might close in on him. Then there would come an unusually loud creak ~~in the~~ as he lay in his bed at night, and he would start up, a stabbing pinning him icily between the shoulder blades, his ~~mouth~~ ^{lips parted} gaping and his throat constricted, unable to swallow the saliva that flooded into his mouth. He would remain like that for minutes until there was a dull in the movement of the boards and he would sink back, shivering and touch the bed-clothes ~~back~~ ^{with} as reassured himself. One ~~night~~ ^{time} he was under his cover,

~~The earliest~~

The earliest situation

Shivering as far back as was possible, the first impression he had of the ~~world~~ in which he could remember himself having been was lying, ~~softly~~ a little uncomfortably, across his mother's stomach, gazing ~~up~~ ^{longingly} at the ceiling which flickered with the light thrown upwards in strange pattern by the kerosene lamp. It was as if the room about him was vast, and the walls gave the impression in the varying gloom of waving slightly, like curtains, but then of curtains which did not hang straight down but closed in rather at the top, so as to give ~~the~~ effect of an effect of oppression, the ceiling held up by the lamplight, but yet encroaching all the same a little on the bounds of its real dimensions, waiting to fall, but unable to do so until there was darkness. Throughout his life he was gripped at night by an inviolate fear of the dark, which they told him he had inherited from his mother. The house being very largely built of weatherboard, at night it would creak ominously, threateningly, and out of the sounds his fertile imagination built nothing definite, but something shapeless, intangible, mystic, an ever-present horror which would not allow him to look behind, but forced him to stare straight to the front, mortally frightened of what he might see there, but unable to close his eyes for fear that the darkness the thing might close in on him. Then there would come an unusually loud creak ~~in the~~ as he lay in his bed at night, and he would start up, a tingling pinning him icily between the shoulder blades, his ~~mouth gaping~~ ^{throat constricted} and his throat constricted, unable to swallow the saliva that flooded into his mouth. He would remain like that for minutes until there was a dull in the movement of the boards and he would sink back, shivering and touch the bed-clothes ~~which~~ ^{to} ~~his~~ ^{to} ~~reassure~~ ^{reassure} himself. One night ~~his~~ ^{he} ~~lay~~ ^{lay} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~his~~ ⁱⁿ ~~room,~~ ^{with his room,}

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for it slept beneath the house at night, and this had been too much for him, so that the small boy kept stirring from his bed to rush to his great-aunt, and she and stood sobbing beside her bed, frantically tagging at her shoulder until she awoke to comfort him, and attempt, albeit with little success to still his fears. He could remember also, quite clearly, that in the early days he used to have a dream, very much the same dream, quite often, almost whenever he lay on his back, so that he always took great care not to go to sleep on his back, but sometimes, of course, he would roll over in his sleep, and then on many of those occasions the dream would happen. This time the thing that ~~terrified~~ ^{terrified} him was in the shape of a sort of fire engine, coloured not red, but a kind of glowing pale jade green, which came after ~~him~~ ^{himself}, silently, relentlessly. He would dream that he was some way from home, when this vehicle would appear, carrying men in some kind of uniform - he knew they all seemed alike but of course no clear details ever remained. They pursued him on the jade fire engine but he always managed to reach home first, just ahead of them, and would run inside. But they would drive the engine after him up the front steps, along the passage, and would hunt him, always gaining, little by little through the rooms in the house until he hid in his great-aunt's corner - wardrobe - one of those formed by a curtain hanging across the corner of a room, and buttoned in behind all the dresses - the greys and blacks, and he crouched his shoulders, crouched in his store. Then through the protective curtain of dresses would come a large green hand, with a flat, flabby palm, hairy, as he had ^{always} imagined dead flesh would be, coldly and blindly taking him out, all would water away as it stretched, infallibly to enshroud him its grasp, and then wake up moaning, to hear the rest of the night, to the eaves with their eternal creaking.

...it slept, but it felt like a house at night, and this had been
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corner wardrobe - one of those formed by a curtain hang-
ing across the corner of a room, and buttoned in behind
all the dresses - the greys and blacks, and bumped his
shoulder, crouched in there. Then through the foot of the
curtain of dresses would come a large green hand, with
a flat, flabby palm, luminous, as he had ^{imagined} dead
flesh would be, coldly sent flinching, pushing him out, able
would wave away as it stretched itself to enshroud
him its grasp, but then woke up moaning to his
the rest of the night, to the evenings with their eternal
creaking.

Of his mother he could remember very little indeed - she had gone away when he was very small. She had been tender and kind - he could recollect that, but ~~physically~~ ^{physically} he could call up no image of her ~~at all~~ ^{and there were} of course, no photos. There in the place ~~where~~ ⁱⁿ his memory and feeling which should have been occupied by the ~~form~~ ^{character} of his mother, her actions, moods, feelings, what she had felt towards him and how she had shown those feelings there was nothing much at all - just a feeble feeling of gentleness and wonder held out to him by her ^{to this early} when his intelligence was just slowly beginning to form. In fact his lying across her stomach on the bed when he was a baby was all that he could directly remember of her ~~at all~~, and his great Aunt Anne told him nothing, adamantly refused to speak of ~~that~~ ^{his mother or father} ~~at all~~, ~~but~~ when we asked would shake her head and say "Oh you don't want to know about that," and when he childishly persisted in the face of her ^{unpleasant} disapproval would sit with her lips tightly drawn closed and shaking her head and frowning at him - she would just move her head slightly from side to side quickly and tightly, just as if she had ~~tightened~~ ^{stopped} all the muscles at the back of her neck and was giving little shivers to relieve the ~~stiffness~~ ^{stiffness}. But Aunt Anne loomed largest of all in his ^{highly} recollection of years - it was only after some time that other ~~people~~ ^{people}, and events not connected with her, began to influence and fit into his life. ~~Other~~ People had called her stern, correct, precise, straight laced. But he could remember that she loved him as a child, in fact did so all his life, but it was her ~~love~~ ^{tenderness} then that blotted out all his feeling for other people.

She worked hard - that he always associated with her. After she had ~~brushed~~ ^{washed} his hands and face in the morning she would help him to dress and they would have breakfast. Afterwards he would go up and help his grandmother to get up and settle her out at the front for the day, and then into the little room near the front ~~to see~~ ^{to see}. He was never allowed to go in there because Aunt Anne did not like to be disturbed. ^{and} ^{very} ^{early} ^{every} day ladies would come and he closed the door with Aunt

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Anne so that they could be fitted for dresses. Once he
peeped through all key-hole but there was only a fat lady
in her petticoat and Aunt Anne taking measurements
with a tape. ~~at night~~ He used to have his tea early
by himself in the kitchen though sometimes the maid
would have hers then too, and then afterwards when
he had got undressed Aunt Anne would come and tuck
him in and leave the light on while he went to sleep.
He could not ever remember the light's being put out,
but whenever he woke ^{in the night} it was down.

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He could not ever remember the light being put out,
but whenever he woke ^{in the night} it was dark.

Chapter 1.

Thinking as far back as was possible, the earliest situation in which he could remember ~~his~~ having been was lying a little uncomfortably across his mother's stomach, gazing bewilderedly at the ceiling which flickered with the light thrown upwards in strange fashion by the kerosene lamp. It was as if the room about him was vast, and its walls in the varying gloom were waving slightly like curtains, ~~but then~~ curtains which did not hang straight down, but closed in rather at the top, so as to give an effect of oppression, the ceiling held up by the lamplight, ~~as if~~ encroaching a little on the bounds of its real dimensions, wanting to fall but unable to do so until there was darkness.

Throughout his life he was gripped by a fear of the dark, which, on one of the few occasions when his aunt mentioned his mother, she told him he had inherited. Since the house was built of weatherboard, at night it would creak ominously so that out of the sounds his fertile imagination built something indefinite, shapeless, horrible, which would not allow him to look behind but forced him to stare rigidly before him, mortally frightened of what he might see even there, but unable to shut his eyes for fear that darkness, the thing, might close in on him. Then there would come an unusually loud creak of the boards as he lay in his bed at night, and he would start up, a tingling sensation pinning him icily between the shoulder blades, with his lips parted and throat constricted, unable to swallow the saliva that flooded into his mouth. He would remain like that for minutes at a time until there was a lull in the creaking which let him sink back fearfully and tuck the bed-clothes tightly over his ears ~~and~~ trying to reassure himself.

One night his dog had set up howling underneath his room, (for it slept beneath the house.)

Chapter I.

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